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ACTION SCA-00

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	A-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DOTE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00	OIGO-00	FAAE-00
	VC1-00	OBO-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	VCIE-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NIMA-00
	GIWI-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00	FMPC-00	SSO-00	SS-00	NCTC-00
	BBG-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	CARC-00
	SAS-00	FA-00	SRAP-00	SWCI-00	PESU-00	SANA-00	/001W

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0910
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
USCENTCOM CFACC PRIORITY
CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

S E C R E T KABUL 002422

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: POST-ELECTION COMPACT: KARZAI TEAM CONSULTATIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) Summary: In final pre-election consultations, President Karzai and his security team agreed to the general concept of the strategic dialogue and a post-election "compact" but had few new ideas to contribute in light of their intense focus on elections. Karzai in particular was engaged in what he terms an "enjoyable" and "useful" dialogue that provides a framework instead of the usual one-by-one raising of issues. End Summary.

Karzai: Talks Give Perspective

¶2. (S) In a private meeting with President Karzai on August 12, I reviewed the strategic dialogue that had begun a month before regarding post-election areas of priority cooperation between the new Afghan administration and the international community. We discussed the five areas of cooperation (sovereignty, reintegration/amnesty, governance/corruption, economic development and regional relations) and then pointed out the inter-relationship among these areas. For example, I said that progress in maintaining peaceful relations with Afghanistan's neighbors, and in reintegrating Taliban insurgents, could have an important impact on the size of the army that Afghanistan needs; Karzai emphatically agreed.

¶3. (S) Karzai responded that he enjoys the discussions that show "deeper" thinking and finds them useful. He asked whether the U.S. wanted Afghanistan to renegotiate the Durand Line, as an example of a broader strategic goal. I responded that we thought Afghanistan and Pakistan should look at the example of Europe, where the emphasis is on cooperation, not borders. In response to another question from Karzai, I said that the U.S. is not looking for permanent bases in Afghanistan, but rather access as needed.

¶4. (S) Returning to the issue of sovereignty, Karzai asked if there could be explicit timeframes or agreement on issues such as detainees. On reintegration he said that he appreciated that the U.S. supports an Afghan-led process but said he would need international support for a mechanism. He asked who I thought should lead such an effort and I mentioned Stanekzai as a respected figure.

¶5. (S) We also touched on the clear inter-relationship between corruption and economic development. I said that we consider this almost a "business proposition": is money

being well spent? And if a ministry is not led by a competent minister, the international community will not put money into it. No investment without competency - I pointed to the difference between a competent minister (Rahimi, in Agriculture) and the opposite (Khan, in Water and Energy) and Karzai agreed. The time for patience is over, I said - you have many impressive ministers and we should not settle for less. Karzai agreed to consult with us on key ministries in the future.

¶16. (S) I followed up by mentioning that governors are also very important to us, and that he had many better appointments but many were still bad. Karzai ruefully agreed, noting however that sometimes we had pushed governors who turned out to be disappointments although most of our recommendations were good. "I made some good choices and some very bad ones" he said, stating that he could consider giving the international community a mechanism, possibly through Independent Directorate for Local Governance director Popal, to be "reassured" on his choices.

¶17. (S) We discussed how corruption is perceived in the United States, and I said that he had made this perception even more entrenched through actions such as pardoning convicted drug traffickers. Karzai replied that this was "very important" to discuss and that he appreciated hearing our concerns at this strategic level. I said that if we saw a commitment to progress on these issues we were open to the idea of an international conference, in Kabul.

The Security Team: Preoccupied but Still Strategizing

¶18. (S) In a meeting that evening with Minister of Defense Wardak, Minister of the Interior Atmar, and NDS Director Saleh, I reviewed our strategic framework with an emphasis on sovereignty, reintegration/amnesty, and regional relations. I mentioned that we were viewing U.S. participation in security operations here in an atmosphere of wanting our leading role to end soon, rather than a continuation of "our" war on terror conducted in Afghanistan territory. I laid out the inter-relationships of our five areas of cooperation, including the issue of the size of the army (in view of regional relations); the issue of reintegration as it might be affected by Afghans controlling detentions; and the issue of how a precondition to successful reintegration would be a cooperative relationship with Pakistan.

¶19. (S) MOI Atmar stated that the most urgent issue at hand for him was election security and he was having trouble looking beyond the next few days - but that in that regard, any help we could give with Pakistan and border security would be appreciated. If there is no improvement in security and voters in the South and East cannot access the polls, then the Taliban may have an easier time recruiting in that areas with the message that the government is "imposed" and not legitimate. NDS Director Saleh noted that his Pakistani counterpart will not speak to him, and Wardak said that General Kiyani is visiting August 17.

¶10. Atmar approved of the idea of a compact and wanted it to be based on the Obama strategy; the Paris Declaration; and the Afghanistan Compact -- because the framework is important but so are the programs which give it life, he said. On sovereignty (detention, Afghan lead in combat) he said that he welcomed this and pointed out that the Afghan National Police are already in the lead, and paying the price in lives lost without air support or adequate weapons. He asked only that the pace of police training be accelerated. I reminded the group that while the United States can train and equip security forces, we cannot provide its ethos - its leadership, recruiting and retention. Minister Wardak replied that he agreed.

¶11. (S) NDS Director Saleh said that his concern was that Afghanistan might be weakened by the elections, gaining some legitimacy but losing because there has been so much scrutiny

of the government's failings. He cautioned that Karzai must honor his political commitments if he wins, which could mean unqualified ministers and governors. Furthermore, Karzai is determined to promote peace through a "Loya Jirga" after the elections, which would potentially become a platform for reintegration -- but could also fail. If Karzai wins through a good turnout, the possibility of a peace deal is greater because he will have more Pashtun legitimacy, Saleh said. If it is in a second round, with a "cabinet of rivals" his hand will be weaker.

¶12. (S) I noted in response that whoever wins will be judged by how they handle such difficulties, and if they pick a qualified cabinet. There is no time to repeat past mistakes, I noted. Saleh agreed but went on to emphasize the need to launch a strategic offensive against Taliban nerve centers, making them irrelevant by pushing them to less viable geographic locations. Saleh said that attacks would lower turnout which in turn could undermine legitimacy. "Everyone is preparing for an angry reaction" he noted realistically.

¶13. (S) On a final note, Wardak said that we could help relieve the political pressure on the president if he is reelected by weighing in to get the right ministers chosen. He also said that "foreign hands" might be part of post-election disturbances - and that UNAMA had not done enough to dispel fears of fraud. On taking over Afghan security with the ANA, he said that at the current rate of training this could happen only in 2013, but he would like it to be sooner. All the ministers asked that the U.S. commit to an "enduring strategic partnership" with Afghanistan, because "we know what will occur if we are left alone with our neighbors."

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